

Council

13 December 2012

Agenda Item 66

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Two Year Old Free Early Learning Entitlement**Date of Meeting:** 13 December 201212 November 2012 – Children & Young People
Committee**Report of:** Interim Director of Children's Services**Contact Officer:** Name: Vicky Jenkins Tel: 29-6110

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Wards Affected: All**FOR GENERAL RELEASE*****Action Required of Council:***To receive the item referred from the Children & Young People Committee for
information:**Recommendation:**

That the extract and the report be noted.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE****4.00pm 12 NOVEMBER 2012****COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES****Present:** Councillors Shanks (Chair) Buckley (Deputy Chair), Brown, Gilbey, A Kitcat,
Lepper, Pissaridou, Powell, Simson and Wealls**Non Voting Co-optees:** Andrew Jeffery, Parent Forum; Bethan Prosser, Amaze/ Voluntary
Sector Forum; Geraldine Hoban, Clinical and Commissioning Group; Alan Bedford, Chair,
Local Safeguarding Children Board; Peter Belluscio, Youth Council and Soad Eboyok,
Youth Council

PART ONE**36. TWO YEAR OLD FREE EARLY LEARNING ENTITLEMENT**

- 36.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services updating on the position set out in an earlier report which had been considered at the Children and Young People's Cabinet Member meeting on 5 March 2012.
- 36.2 Disadvantaged two year olds had received free early learning since September 2009. Currently this applied to around seven per cent of two year olds in Brighton & Hove (200 children). The government was extending this entitlement as a statutory duty to 20 per cent of two year olds from September 2013 (600 children in Brighton & Hove) and 40 per cent from September 2014 (1,300 children). Besides providing an update the report was intended to draw the committee's attention to significant risks associated with the statutory duty, both financial and in relation to the provision of places and to draw its attention to the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, completed in May 2012 which detailed current childcare supply in Brighton & Hove.
- 36.3 From September 2013 provision of free early learning for eligible two year olds would become a statutory duty. From that date eligible families would be those in receipt of out of work benefits, and the entitlement would cover an estimated 600 children in Brighton & Hove. From September 2014 eligibility would be extended to include low income working families and would cover 1,300 children in the city. The government was currently consulting on also including more disabled children and those who leaving care through adoption.
- 36.4 The council had a statutory duty to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and the main findings of the latest assessment were set out in Appendix 1 to the report, the full CSA had been placed in the members' rooms. The CSA showed the number of childcare places available in the different areas of the city, and data from this had been used, along with child poverty data, to show where place expansion will be needed.
- 36.5 In order to provide places for children in their local communities, some expansion would be needed for September 2013, and then significant extra places will be required to provide for all eligible children from September 2014. Most additional places would be needed in Moulsecoomb, Whitehawk and the city centre. Although the government had announced that £100m of capital funding would be provided to expand childcare provision information had not yet been received regarding when this would be made available and how it would be allocated. The level of funding envisaged would not be sufficient to provide the number of additional places needed and there was no immediately identifiable site to provide more places in Whitehawk where the greatest increase in provision was needed.
- 36.6 Councillor Wealles expressed the view that he hoped that private sector providers would be encouraged to create additional places. The Head of Service, Sure Start, stated that this was being supported and encouraged, however, although, the private sector was still reasonably buoyant these settings were located in more advantaged areas and were targeted at working parents and were therefore unlikely to provide places in

significant numbers. The voluntary sector might be able to respond if capital funding was provided.

- 36.7 In answer to questions by Councillor Pissaridou it was explained that although places were provided by childminders and whilst work was continuing to support and encourage expansion of this sector, parents tended to prefer nurseries or playgroups, currently there were fewer childminders operating in those areas of the city where places were most needed.
- 36.8 Councillor Pissaridou stated that whilst she supported the concept of free childcare provision to this group she was gravely concerned, regarding the consequences for other areas of service provision in the absence of adequate provision from central government.
- 36.9 Councillor Lepper stated that voluntary sector was currently operating under severe financial pressures similar to those being experienced by local authorities. She was appalled that the authority was being required to make provision without the necessary levels of funding having been made available to it, this would raise parents expectations without there being sufficient places.

36.10 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee notes the revenue funding required to meet the duty to provide free childcare places for up to 1,300 two year olds, and that revenue will come from the Dedicated Schools Grant, the amount of which is not yet known; and
- (2) That the Committee notes the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Data from this indicates that across the city there are enough places for two year olds in September 2013, but that there are insufficient places in the areas where they are needed. The city does not have enough places for the expanded offer in September 2014. There is not sufficient capital funding available for the local authority to expand places, and it is unlikely that private, voluntary and independent providers will respond by increasing places where needed.

